

Subject: comments on STIP

From: Robert French <bgfrench@pci.net>

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To: DOT_STIP@dot.state.ak.us



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Statewide Planning Office
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Dear Governor Murkowski:

Thank you for considering my comments on the Draft Fiscal Year 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). I feel it would be a horrible waste of state resources and federal transportation dollars to build the Knik Arm Bridge, the Gravina Island Bridge, and the Juneau Road.

As detailed in the latest STIP, funding for the State's "core" transportation program have been reduced due, in part, to a congressional mandate to spend over \$450 million on the Knik Arm and Gravina Bridges. Now that the earmarks have been removed, we, as a state, have the chance to set our own transportation projects, and I am sure you will find public opinion overwhelmingly saying that those 3 projects are both unnecessary and un-wanted.

Over half of the State's transportation budget for the next 3 years will be consumed by the Knik Arm Bridge, the Juneau Road, and the Gravina Bridge if the current draft plan is instituted. Roughly two-thirds of the transportation projects proposed for future funding in the January 2005 FY2004-2006 STIP Amendment 8 were eliminated in DOT's latest plan. That is over \$2 Billion in highly needed projects that won't happen under this current plan to make room for 2 "Bridges to Nowhere"; that is just plain wrong!

I believe it is far more important to fix the existing traffic and transportation problems throughout our state, before spending any money on those 3 projects. Not only do we need the \$311 million for Seward Highway safety and congestion relief improvements, \$210 million for improvements to the Glenn Highway, millions for projects in the Fairbanks area, \$323 million for the Community Transportation Program, but also \$256 million for projects deemed critical for construction of the gas pipeline.

The Department of Transportation now has a unique opportunity to re-evaluate how we should spend our transportation dollars. Be assured that there will be vigorous public debate on our statewide transportation priorities, and I urge you to delete the controversial Knik Arm Bridge, Gravina Bridge, and Juneau Roads completely in the next Amendment to FY2006-2008 STIP.

Sincerely,

Robert French

Gail French

cc: State Legislature